

IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing Of Claims:

~~Please amend the claims as follows:~~

1-11. (Cancelled)

12. (New) A contents management apparatus for managing the transfer of contents between a computer and a recording and reproduction device comprising:
storing means for storing contents identification information, a number indicating a predetermined number of times the contents is capable of being copied, and a check-out list indicating medium information storing the contents which is capable of being copied, in association with each other, wherein the storing means is provided in a secret area of a medium in which neither reading nor writing is permitted by a disclosed procedure;

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check-out executing means for executing a check-out process which is capable of copying the contents identification information in the contents management apparatus to another medium;

check-in executing means for executing a check-in process which is capable of copying the contents identification information in the another medium to the contents management apparatus;

subtracting means for subtracting a number of copied contents identification information from the predetermined number, and for writing the medium information storing the contents in the storing means; and

means for adding the number of copied contents identification information to the predetermined number, and for deleting the medium information of the checked-in contents identification information from the storing means, where the check-in process is executed.

13. (New) An apparatus according to claim 12, wherein a security level of the storing means depends on a type of medium storing the contents.

14. (New) An apparatus according to claim 13, wherein the medium further comprises a public area in which reading or writing is permitted by the disclosed procedure.

15. (New) An apparatus according to claim 12, wherein a check-out list manages a device of which contents are checked out.

16. (New) An apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the contents stored in the public area is encrypted or decrypted by using the medium information.

17. (New) A contents management apparatus for managing the transfer of contents between a computer and a recording and reproduction device comprising:

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means for storing contents to be managed;
storing means for storing contents identification information and a flag which indicates whether or not the stored contents identification information can be transferred, in association with each other, wherein the storing means for storing contents identification information and the flag are provided in a secret area of a medium, in which neither reading nor writing is permitted by a disclosed procedure;
means for executing a check-out process which transfers the stored contents identification information to another medium; and
means for deleting the stored contents identification information from the storing means for storing contents identification information to be managed, where the check-out process is executed and the flag, corresponding to the contents identification information of the checked-out contents, indicates that the stored contents can be transferred.

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18. (New) An apparatus according to claim 17, wherein a security level of the means for storing contents identification information and the flag depends on a type of medium storing the contents.

19. (New) An apparatus according to claim 18, wherein the medium further comprises a public area in which reading or writing is permitted by the disclosed procedure.

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20. (New) An apparatus according to claim 20, wherein the contents stored in the public area is encrypted or decrypted by using the contents identification information.

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